

What is claimed is:

1. A topical composition for improving or preventing deleterious skin conditions, exfoliating skin, accelerating skin turnover, or lightening skin, the topical composition comprising an effective amount of (a) L-carnitine, an acyl L-carnitine, a salt thereof, or a mixture thereof and (b) one or more hydroxy acids, proteolytic enzymes, skin lightening agents, or a mixture thereof, in a pharmacologically acceptable vehicle for topical application.

2. The topical composition of claim 1, wherein the topical composition has a pH of from about 3.5 to about 8.

3. The topical composition of claim 1, wherein the topical composition has a pH of from about 6 to about 8.

4. The topical composition of claim 1, wherein the hydroxy acid is glycolic acid, lactic acid, salicylic acid, or a mixture thereof.

5. The topical composition of claim 1, wherein the proteolytic enzyme is papain, bromelain, or a mixture thereof.

6. The topical composition of claim 1, wherein the skin lightening agent is a melanin inhibitor.

7. The topical composition of claim 6, wherein the melanin inhibitor is arbutin, kojic acid, rumex extract, or a mixture thereof.

8. The topical composition of claim 1, wherein the skin lightening agent is a melanin bleach.

9. The topical composition of claim 8, wherein the melanin bleach is a peroxide, hydroquinone, enzyme glucose oxidase, or a mixture thereof.

10. The topical composition of claim 1, wherein the topical composition is selected from the group consisting of ointments, lotions, gels, suspensions, emulsions, and creams.

11. A method of exfoliating skin comprising topically applying an effective amount of the topical composition of claim 1.

12. A method of accelerating skin turnover comprising topically applying an effective amount of the topical composition of claim 1.

13. A method of lightening skin comprising topically applying an effective amount of the topical composition of claim 1.

14. A topical composition comprising (a) one or more additives, and (b) an effective amount of L-carnitine, an acyl L-carnitine, a salt thereof, or a mixture thereof to improve or prevent deleterious skin conditions, exfoliate skin, and/or accelerate skin turnover, in a pharmacologically acceptable vehicle, wherein the pH of the topical composition ranges from about 6 to about 8.

15. The topical composition of claim 14, wherein the pH of the topical composition is from about 6.5 to about 7.

16. The topical composition of claim 14, wherein the additive has an optimum pH of from about 6 to about 7.

17. The topical composition of claim 14, wherein the additive is a proteolytic enzyme or skin lightener.

18. The topical composition of claim 17, wherein the proteolytic enzyme is papain.

19. The topical composition of claim 17, wherein the skin lightener is glucose oxidase.